



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Committee

VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCIES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 03 February 2012

Purpose of Report:

To seek the approval of Policy and Strategy Committee to progress the process for voluntary redundancy and to report back the outcomes to the Human Resources Committee.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Frank Swann
Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 967 0880

Email : frank.swann@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact : Elisabeth Reeson
(0115) 967 5889 elisabeth.reeson@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under its Redundancy Framework, in cases where the need to effect redundancies has been identified either within a particular work group or within the workforce as a whole, the Service will normally consider applications for voluntary redundancy where this would reduce the need to make compulsory redundancies.
- 1.2 Applications for voluntary redundancy are agreed at the discretion of the Service and require a business case to be submitted by an appropriate Principal Officer for approval.
- 1.3 All business cases are scrutinised by the Discretionary Compensation Payments Board (DCPB), which takes into account a number of factors when making its decision. These would include the cost of the redundancy, whether it would mitigate the need for compulsory redundancy, whether it would offer an opportunity to an employee at risk of redundancy who could be redeployed to the vacant post, and the impact of the potential loss of experience and skills.
- 1.4 In all redundancy situations, the cost of the redundancy payment is normally subject to a pay-back period of 2½ years – ie: the cost saving must normally be realised within the pay-back period.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Service has recently written to all non-uniformed staff to establish interest in applying for voluntary redundancy. This forms part of the Service strategy to reduce salary costs to meet budgetary reductions and to mitigate, wherever possible, the need to make compulsory redundancies as a result of a re-organisation of the non-uniformed establishment.
- 2.2 The Service has received a number of expressions of interest and will be confirming estimated redundancy and pension payments to individuals to enable them to consider whether they wish to apply for redundancy. An appropriate Head of Service will consider each request and, if supported, a business case will be submitted to the DCPB for approval.
- 2.3 Under current governance arrangements, the Human Resources Committee considers the recommendations of the DCPB, and final approval is sought from the Fire Authority. Whilst this is appropriate in the case of compulsory redundancies, the potential delay between meetings can affect calculations for voluntary redundancy applicants.
- 2.4 Whilst the above arrangement ensures that Members are fully and rightly involved in decisions which will result in compulsory redundancies, it is recommended that applications for voluntary redundancy are dealt with as an Officer delegation, following approval by the DCPB, and that decisions are

reported to the Human Resources Committee as part of normal reporting arrangements. The Fire Authority will then be notified at the next available meeting of the changes to the establishment, as per the governance arrangements.

- 2.5 By delegating authority to approve applications for voluntary redundancy to Officer level, the process of effecting voluntary redundancies can be expedited in a shorter timeframe. This means that savings and re-structuring proposals can be implemented without undue delay, and informed decisions made regarding the need for further redundancies. Reducing the time taken to reach a decision will also alleviate uncertainty for employees.
- 2.6 It is accepted, in making this recommendation, that redundancy situations involving Officers at Principal Officer level should continue to be subject to the approval of the full Fire Authority.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An ear-marked reserve of £500,000 has been established to meet the costs of organisational transition, which includes the cost of potential redundancies.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The terms of reference of the Discretionary Payment Compensation Board will require amendment to reflect any changes to governance arrangements.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

A consistent approach to the application of redundancies ensures that any challenge under equalities legislation is mitigated.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The process for effecting redundancies, whether compulsory or voluntary, is covered by the provisions of employment law.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

It is important that the Authority applies any decisions taken in relation to redundancy and severance payments fairly and consistently and with due regard to the interests

of the Service. The role undertaken by the Discretionary Compensation Payments Board ensures that appropriate scrutiny is applied to voluntary redundancy applications and gives due consideration to the impact and cost to the Authority in each individual case.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee delegate the responsibility for effecting the voluntary redundancy process to the Chief Fire Officer and that the Chief Fire Officer is charged with reporting the outcomes to Human Resources Committee before reporting back the permanent changes to the establishment to the Fire Authority.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER